


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION For Fiscal Year 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>Dennis L. Bachman</p> <p>Ntera, LLC</p> <p>328 West Main St.</p> <p>New Auburn, WI 54757</p>	<p>Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.</p> <p>Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.</p>
	<p>Contact for further information:</p> <p>PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</p>
	<p>Date:</p> <p>December 1, 2021</p>
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>	
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>	
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>Dennis Bachman</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>President</p>
	<p>Phone</p> <p>833-466-8372</p>
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>3/15/2022</p>

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Ntera, LLC	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$1,537,762.00
Federal Employer Identification No. 82-2410493	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$659,041.00
Contact Name and Title Dennis L. Bachman	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$2,196,803.00
Telephone Number 833-466-8372	Project Name Chippewa County Broadband Initiative
E-mail Address(es) dbachman@citizens-connected.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH)
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last-mile and Backbone
Grant Manager Contact Name Dennis L. Bachman	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number dbachman@citizens-connected.com 833-466-8372
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Town of Cleveland, 20470 State Highway 64, Cornell, WI 54732 FEIN 39-6005829~ Town of Ruby, 31700 County Highway M, Holcombe, WI 54745 FEIN 39-600695~ Town of Arthur, P.O. Box 278, Cadott, WI 54727 FEIN 39-1400433~ Town of Anson, 16827 105th Ave. Chippewa Falls, WI, 54729 FEIN 39-6005776~ Town of Eagle Point, 14802 State Highway 124 Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 FEIN 39-6005866~ Chippewa County, 711 N. Bridge Street, Room 104, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 FEIN 39-6005678~ Marshfield Clinic, 1000 North Oak Ave. Marshfield, WI 54449	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Design and construct FTTH to rural areas in Chippewa County. Extend existing infrastructure from previous grant programs, in the Town of Anson, Arthur, Cleveland, Goetz, Eagle Point, Estella, and Ruby.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1Gbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 50Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 25Mbps

County or Counties served by this project Chippewa County	Community or Communities served by this project Town of Anson, Arthur, Cleveland, Eagle Point, Estella, Goetz, and Ruby
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve Century Link (DSL), Verizon, (Cellular), AT&T (Cellular), HughesNet (Satellite), ViaSat Inc. (Satellite)	
Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no) Yes	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) Yes
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 16	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 300
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 5	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 43
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) Yes
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) No	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) No
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) Yes	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant: Ntera LLC	Project: Chippewa County Broadband Initiative
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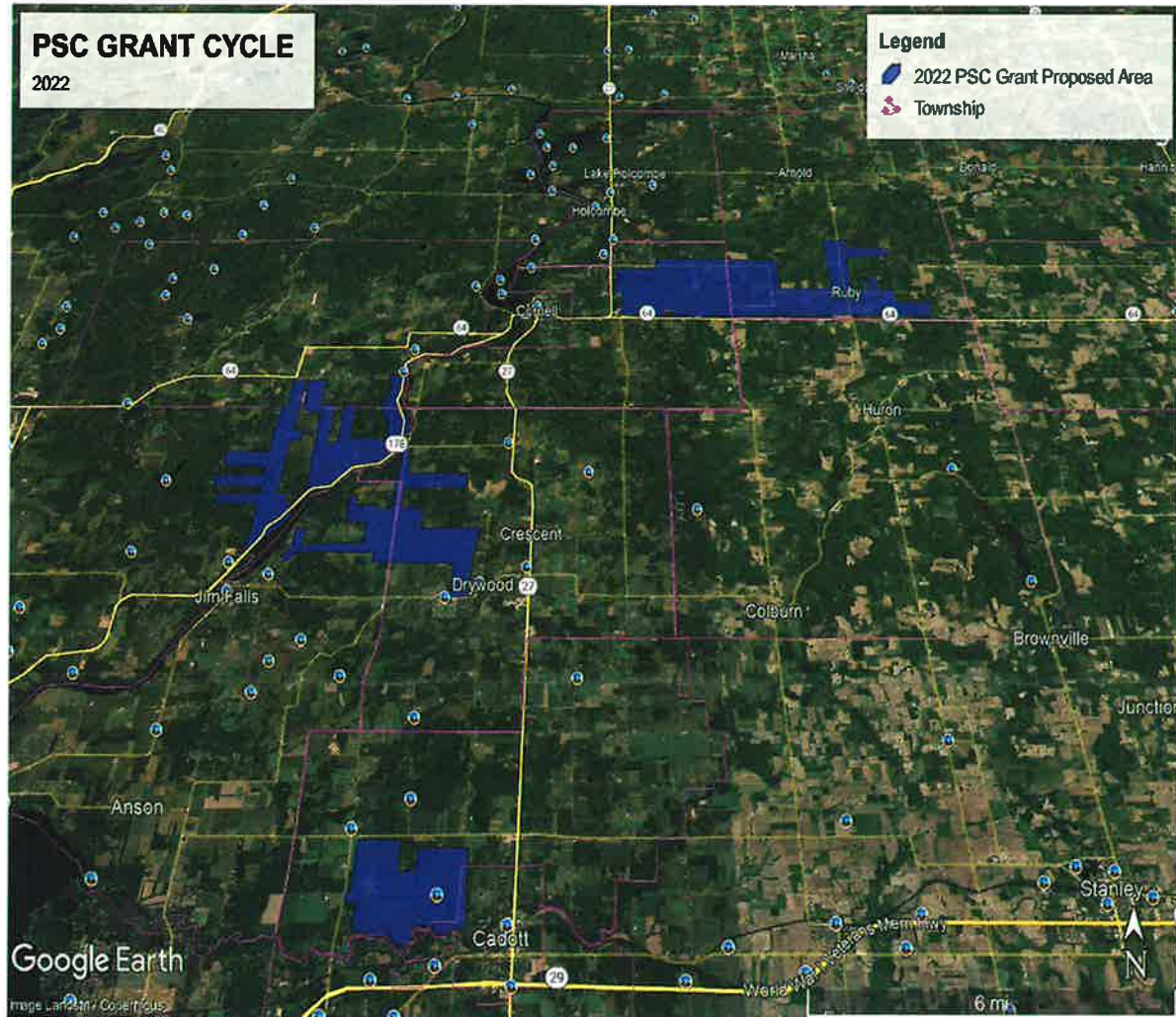
Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 1,274,468	\$ 546,201	\$ 1,820,669
2	Equipment	\$ 230,589	\$ 98,824	\$ 329,413
3	Supplies	\$ 3,270	\$ 1,401	\$ 4,671
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	\$ 23,100	\$ 9,900	\$ 33,000
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	\$ 6,335	\$ 2,715	\$ 9,050
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 1,537,762	\$ 659,041	\$ 2,196,803

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Town of Cleveland	Partner	Cash	\$ 15,000
2	Town of Arthur	Partner	Cash	\$ 10,000
3	Town of Ruby	Partner	Cash	\$ 15,000
4	Town of Anson	Partner	Cash	\$ 5,000
5	Ntera LLC	Applicant	Cash	\$ 432,859
6	Chippewa County ARPA	Partner	Cash	\$ 171,182
7	Marshfield Clinic	Partner	Cash	\$ 10,000
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 659,041

Clear Static Map of Chippewa County Broadband Initiative



3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information

a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.

Entity Name: Ntera, LLC

Identity Private Organization/Internet, Voice, and Video Service Provider

Entity Address: 328 West Main Street, New Auburn, WI, 54757

Contact Name/Title: Dennis L Bachman/ President

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 127, New Auburn, WI, 54757

Telephone Number: 833.466.8372

Email: dbachman@citizens-connected.com

b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.

Public Partner: Chippewa County

FEIN: 39-6005678

Contact Name/Title: Randy Shcolz/County Administrator

Mailing Address: 711 N Bridge St. Room 104, Chippewa Falls, WI, 54729

Telephone Number: 715.726.7981

Email: rshcolz@co.chippewa.wi.us

(See page 24-28 A Statement of Explanation)

Public Partner: Town of Anson

FEIN: 39-6005776

Contact Name/Title: Jen Jensen/Clerk

Mailing Address: 16827 105th Ave., Chippewa Falls, WI, 54729

Telephone Number: 715.579.1648

Email: jenjensen.ansonclerk@yahoo.com

(See page 29 A Letter of Support and Matching Fund Commitment)

c. Partner: Town of Arthur

FEIN: 39-1400433

Contact Name/Title: Donna Shifflett/Clerk

Mailing Address: PO Box 278, Cadott, WI, 54727

Telephone Number: 715.312.0015

Email: clerk@townofarthur.com

(See page 30 A Letter of Support and Matching Fund Commitment)

Public Partner: Town of Cleveland

FEIN: 39-6005829

Contact Name/Title: Mike Beighley/Chairperson

Mailing Address: 20470 State Highway 64, Cornell, WI, 54732

Telephone Number: 715.239.3922

Email: beighleymg@gmail.com

(See Exhibit A.1 Letter of Support and Matching Fund Commitment)

Public Partner: Town of Ruby

FEIN: 39-600695

Contact Name/Title: Joy Jones/Clerk

Mailing Address: 31700 County Highway M, Holcombe, WI, 54745

Telephone Number: 715.452.5657

Email: joyjo@centurytel.net

(See Exhibit A- Letter of Support and Matching Fund Commitment)

Public Partner: Marshfield Clinic

Contact Name/Title: Chris Meyer/Director of Virtual Care

Mailing Address: 1000 N Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI, 54449

Telephone Number: 715.221.5816

Email: meyer.christopher@marshfieldclinic.org

(See Exhibit B- Letter of Support and Matching Fund Commitment)

Public Partner: Town of Eagle Point

FEIN: 39-6005866

Contact Name/Title: Dennis Ferstenou/Chairperson

Mailing Address: 214802 State Highway 124, Chippewa Falls, WI, 54729

Telephone Number: 715.720.1226

Email: dferstenou@charter.net

(See Exhibit C- Letter of Support)

C. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).

Ntera, LLC is certified to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.50(2)(b) Wisconsin State Statutes, with non-exclusive statewide operating authority. Ntera, LLC (PSCW Utility #4304) is currently designed to serve over 1,200 Broadband Internet subscribers in the rural areas of Holcombe, Sheldon, Ladysmith, Cadott, and Cornell Wisconsin. The advanced fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network provides Fiber-Fast Internet service with speeds up to 1Gbps, Fiber-TV, and Voice.

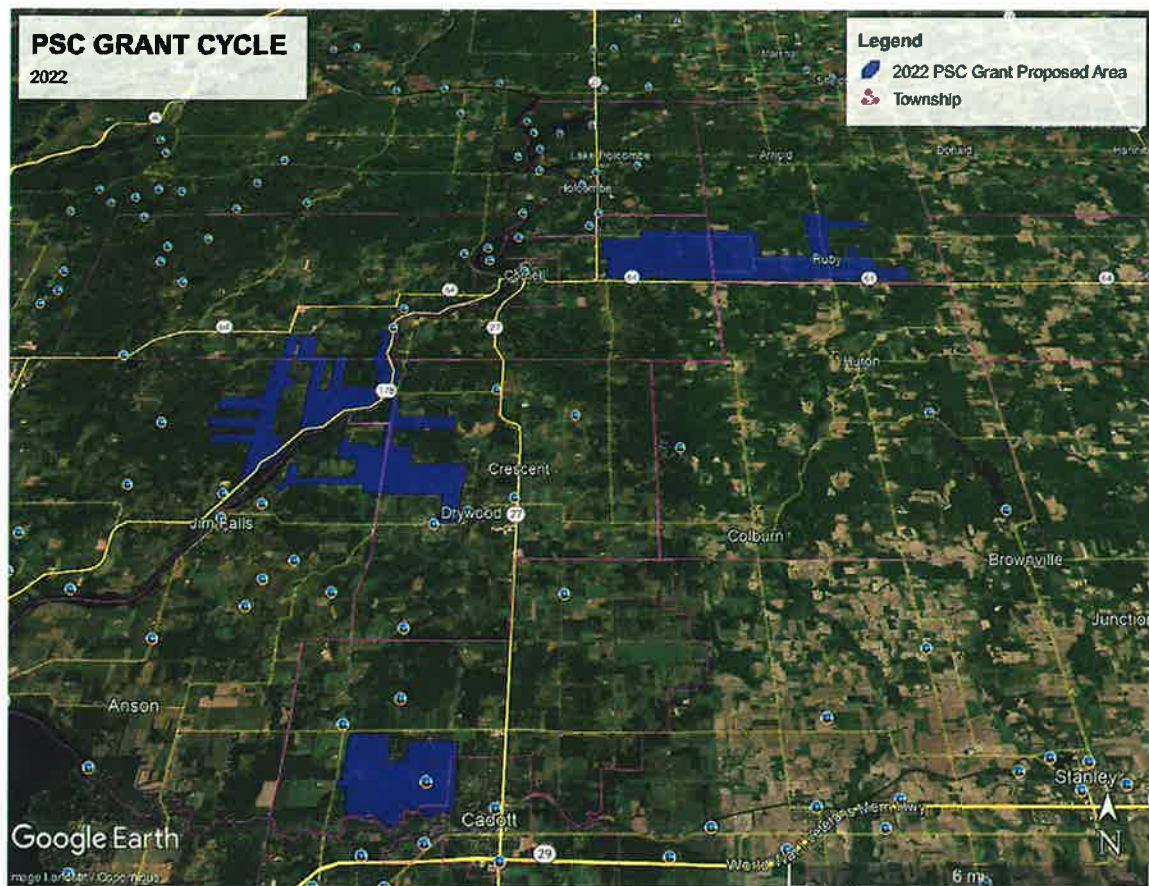
3.2.2 Description of the project

a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.

The map must be accompanied by:

- **A URL reference to a spatial file (Geodatabase / Feature Class, or Shapefile or KML) showing the proposed service area. A spatial file including census blocks that intersect the proposed project area is also acceptable.**
- **The geospatial file of the proposed project must be emailed to pscbroadbanddata@wisconsin.gov by the application deadline.**

PSC staff can provide support to ensure an accurate spatial file is delivered to the Commission. Please contact the State Broadband Office mapping team for mapping assistance at PSCBroadbandData@wisconsin.gov.



The Chippewa County Broadband Initiative will provide Fiber-Fast Broadband service to unserved and underserved areas in the Northwestern part of Wisconsin. The Towns of Anson, Arthur, Cleveland, Eagle Point, Estella, Goetz, and Ruby will be affected by this project. All townships listed are in Chippewa County Wisconsin.

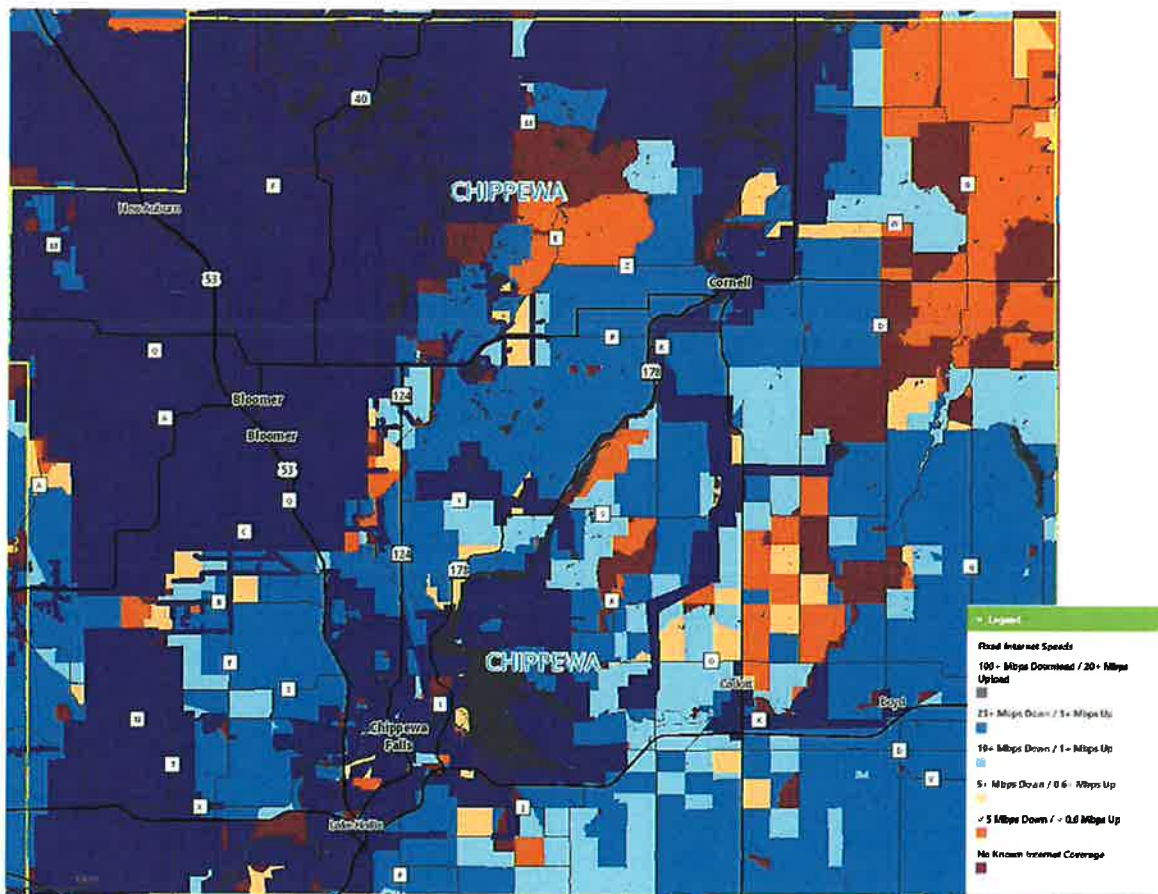
This initiative will include approximately 21.35 miles and 143 homes in the Town of Eagle Point. The project will provide a fiber connection starting at Ntera's handhole location near the intersection of County Highway R and State Highway 178, which will then extend South along State Highway 178. This project will provide FTTH within the rural areas including 200th St., 210th St., and 215th St. in Jim Falls, Wisconsin.

The project will also include approximately 14.13 miles and 59 homes within the Northern region in the Town of Anson and neighboring community, Town of Arthur. This will provide a fiber connection starting at Ntera's existing handhole location at the intersection of Cnty. Hwy S and 254th St., extending North on 254th St., then West on 150th Ave., before heading North on Cnty. Hwy K. This project will create a stable fiber network and will provide FTTH to residents and businesses within the township. The Town of Cleveland, Estella, Goetz, and Ruby; the

project will include approximately 24.41 miles and 114 homes. Service will be offered to all rural locations along the route.

B. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.

The entire project is in unserved and underserved areas according to the PSC Broadband Map.



C. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:

-Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.

-Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.

-Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.

-Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

The Chippewa County Broadband Initiative is designed to bring Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service to unserved and underserved areas within the Towns of Anson, Arthur, Cleveland, Eagle Point, Estella, Goetz, and Ruby. All townships listed are in Chippewa County which is in Northwestern Wisconsin. This project is an extension of work completed from previous grant programs. Currently, no fiber-based broadband is available or planned to reach end user customers in these areas. FTTH technology offers faster, more reliable access to higher speeds than aging copper plant. The speed of FTTH is determined only by the electronics installed. This initiative will be installed with a minimum speed of 50Mbps download, and 25Mbps upload. The system is designed to support 1Gbps upload and download speeds. In addition to broadband, the system will also deliver high quality Fiber-TV and traditional phone service, over the same fiber. This service will impact the rural areas located in Chippewa County and will provide rural residents, family farms, and local businesses with reliable, affordable broadband service, delivered at the speed of light.

Households Served: 300

Businesses Served: 16

Seasonal Residents & Tourists Served: 12 (estimated)

Standard Data Rates:

Upload Speed: 25Mbps - 250Mbps

Download Speed: 50Mbps – 1Gbps

D. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the "last mile," "middle mile," or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.

The Chippewa County Broadband Initiative includes last mile, and backbone. The initiative is an extension of work completed from previous grant programs. It will provide users with the same quality Fiber-Fast services with dedicated backbone. Each home that requests construction will receive a dedicated fiber line for their home/business. A primary goal of every expansion and construction of a new area within Ntera's network, is to create resiliency and fault tolerance.

E. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.

The Chippewa County Broadband Initiative will continue to implement dedicated FTTH using Calix equipment. The "last mile" provides dedicated bandwidth using GPON technology. The "backbone" is continually monitored and managed to ensure customers always have available the connect speeds they subscribe to. Ntera has a proven history of successful installations using this technology, and these projects are extensions of the existing network and construction of a new area. This FTTH network will be integrated with the existing FTTH network and broadband electronics used to provide broadband services in the Ntera service territory.

Pricing in the proposed service area will be as follows:

(Download/Upload)

50Mbps/25Mbps: \$39.99

100Mbps/50Mbps: \$49.99

250Mbps/100Mbps: \$89.99

1Gbps/250Mbps: \$129.99

Symmetrical bandwidth is available upon request, Ntera will specifically configured bandwidth for business applications and residential customers with certain needs. Full-featured voice service is available at the subscriber's request. Subscribers will not be required to take voice services in the proposed service area. Ntera will also provide Fiber-TV service. This service includes major television networks such as CNN, and ESPN; local television networks such as WEAU, and KSTP, and Public Broadcast Television.

F. For middle mile projects:

N/A This project is not a "middle mile" design or facility.

g) A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. Project period is up to 24 months.

Due to the unknown availability of materials, the timeline below reflects a 24-month project period, however, the goal is to begin this project in 2023.

Project Plan Activities ("X") equals completion timeline	Project Timeline (in quarters)											
	2022				2023				2024			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Grant Submitted	X											
PSC Grant Announcement and execution of agreement			X									
Bidding					X							
Permitting						X	X					
Directional Drilling										X		
Fiber Placement (last mile routes)										X	X	
Fiber Placement (laterals to serve structures)										X	X	
Splicing											X	
General Availability												X

3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

Unit		Labor	Material	TOTAL
BDO	Fiber Pedestal	\$ 121,314.00	\$ 132,689.00	\$ 254,003.00
BFO	Fiber Optic Cable	\$ 712,917.00	\$ 252,574.00	\$ 965,491.00
BM60	Directional Drilling	\$ 295,268.00	\$ 28,379.00	\$ 323,647.00
Splicing	Single & Mass Fusion	\$ 30,312.00	\$ 4,673.00	\$ 34,985.00
SEB	Drop Fiber, Riser, Grounding	\$ 432,730.00	\$ 68,487.00	\$ 501,217.00
Permitting	Permit (State and County)	\$ 9,050.00	\$ -	\$ 9,050.00
ONT	ONT Enclosure, Electronics	\$ 7,700.00	\$ 67,710.00	\$ 75,410.00
Planning	Design Plan	\$ 33,000.00	\$ -	\$ 33,000.00
		GRAND TOTAL		\$ 2,196,803.00

All facilities will be owned

b) The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

Ntera's accounting records will demonstrate that all the grant funds requested in this application will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the unserved and underserved areas addressed in this application. The grant funds requested in this application will only be used for authorized purposes. Ntera's self-funded and match contributions to this project are 30% of the planned construction costs, as detailed on page 4. Also, see current financial statement, on page 23.

c) The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:

- * Project planning that takes place during the performance period.**
- * Obtaining construction permits.**
- * Construction of facilities, including construction of both "middle mile" and "last mile" infrastructure.**
- * Installation and testing of the broadband service**

Please see itemized budget under item 3.2.3 for a summary of construction costs.

3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

b) Public-private partnerships. If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

In 2022 Ntera has obtained a Public-Private Partnership Agreement with the following Townships: Town of Anson (Exhibit H), Town of Arthur (Exhibit I), Town of Eagle Point (Exhibit G). There are existing Public-Private Agreement (PPPA) with the following Town of Estella, the Town of Goetz, and the Town of Cleveland. These agreements are noted on previous grant cycles. Further documentation can be requested to verify existing PPPA.

c) Existing broadband service. A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. Current Broadband Providers:

No other provider offers FTTH technology in the proposed service area, nor does the PSC Wisconsin Broadband Map show any other terrestrial based provider capable of meeting the PSC 25/3 definition of broadband. We are unaware of any requirement compelling the current wireline provider to construct facilities capable of delivering this service in the next five years. Per the PSC mapping tool, CenturyLink is the only landline service provider in the project area. There are an estimated 316 households that live, and work in the Chippewa County Broadband Initiative project area. CenturyLink's advertised speeds are 10Mbps download, 1bps upload. This speed is also subject to shared lines and outdated equipment.

d) Project impact. A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

This project will have a significant impact. The geographical area served by this project includes 59.89 miles in Chippewa County. The shape of the project is irregular and designed to impact the greatest number of subscribers. This region has 316 residential and business locations desperate for broadband service that will bridge the gap in broadband coverage. A local resident in the Town of Ruby emailed Ntera. Please note details from the email, "We are in desperate need of an upgraded service. I work from home from time to time and the current service offered here just doesn't cut it." Reference Exhibit L.

The residents of this rural area have been increasingly challenged with the lack of broadband. Ntera will offer dedicated FTTH and Fiber-Fast Internet speeds up to 1Gbps. This distinguished service can provide the highest quality of broadband recognized among the industry standard.

The Fiber-Fast Internet packages will range from 50Mbps-1Gbps. Ntera will offer customized packages if the subscriber requires a symmetrical upload/download connection. These requests are handled on a case-by-case scenario.

e) Scalability. A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

- **The number of users**
- **The number of nodes**
- **The number of services provided**
- **The geographical area served by the project**
- **The number of aggregation points in middle mile projects**

This project is an extension from previous grant programs. Residents of the area have commonly reached out to Ntera asking for additional expansion. Please note details from a resident in the Town of Ruby, "Ntera came through the Holcombe area and only a portion of the road I live on was completed, the service never reached my residence." Reference Exhibit L.

Ntera's fiber network, both current and new, is designed to create a solid, secure, and iterating circuit. Brand new infrastructure and multiple high-capacity fiber rings will accommodate future expansion plans while delivering the same quality high-speed service our existing subscribers are used to. With the location of the proposed project in relation to the existing FTTH service providers, there is potential for further growth of this service area.

f) Economic development. A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- A discussion of potential economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.**
- An explanation of how an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.**
- An explanation of the likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.**
- A demonstration of how improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.**
- A demonstration of how the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.**

There is a large economic aspect to this project. As stated in Exhibit J, a local company; Mason Companies Inc. has developed a company policy that will offer flexibility to their employees. This "Hybrid" approach will give employees the opportunity to work from home, enhancing their productivity, and lowering the risk of unnecessary exposure and "out of pocket" expenses. Offering this type of flexibility will allow more employment opportunities within the community. This type of employment opportunity attracts people to the area and who could become full time residents and benefit the existing telecommuting population.

The economic impact to surrounding agricultural establishments will be profound. The implementation of technology equipment that utilizes broadband will protect crop investments, monitor livestock, enhance soil samples, and could potentially increase farmers overall production.

Increasing and improving the download and upload speeds would provide better support for many homes and businesses within the project area. This will allow the ability to upload and download files, communicate via live stream, and perform daily duties without buffering or interruptions. This will enable individuals the ability to continue to work, and live, through periods of quarantine. Please note a letter from Congressman, Tom Tiffany. Congressman Tiffany states, "Broadband is critical to our economy and a vital component in educating our children". Reference Exhibit D.

The property value of a home increases when a fiber line is buried, and dedicated service is offered to the home specifically. According to a recent research project from the University of Colorado, high speed internet can add an average of 3.1% to your home value. Realtors in this rural community all agree that having FTTH is a huge selling point and something new buyers are inquiring about. Strong, reliable access to broadband is no longer a luxury, but a necessity.

Please refer to Exhibit F, a letter from a local realtor, "It has been written in multiple contracts that a buyer is to test broadband service to the home within so many days of an accepted contract to ensure the speed is operational; for their needs when working from home." Reference Exhibit K; An excerpt from a social media post on the Lake Holcombe Community Discussion page says, "ISO lake lot or lake home...high speed internet availability is a must for my job. Ntera at our land is amazing so seeking lake property to build or lake home. within Ntera coverage area. Anyone selling or know someone looking to sell?" There are many comments observed over various platforms that support this information.

Employment, healthcare, and educational opportunities have all become dependent on reliable broadband service. The broadband capabilities created by the completion of this project will allow for both current and future employment, healthcare, and educational opportunities in this region of Northwestern Wisconsin.

3.2.5 Other information supporting the application

a) A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.

Ntera LLC is owned equally by Chippewa Valley Satellite, a subsidiary of Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative, and Citizens Connected. Both parent companies are cooperatives, and have equal ownership in Ntera, LLC. In early 2017 the parent companies met with the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation and discussions that started in that meeting lead to the formation of Ntera, LLC. There was a need to bring broadband to the rural areas of Chippewa County and surrounding areas that was not being met by the current providers. By January 2018 the first Ntera customer was connected in the Town of Lake Holcombe. Without any outside assistance, Ntera has brought Internet, Video, and Voice to over 500 customers Expansion projects were then added for the southern shores of Lake Holcombe, and then on to the northern shores, continuing North to parts of southern Rusk County. Considering Ntera was a new start-up a few short years ago, Ntera's take rate has been a rewarding. Some areas are over an 80% take rate and continue to grow! Ntera started with the most densely populated, unserved and underserved areas of the region to generate a revenue stream and are now expanding to less populated areas. We have received State PSC Grants, in addition to Federal Reconnect, and ARPA funds. These funds have allowed us to expand into more rural areas, a commitment of our original charter. Currently Ntera serves over 1200 broadband customers.

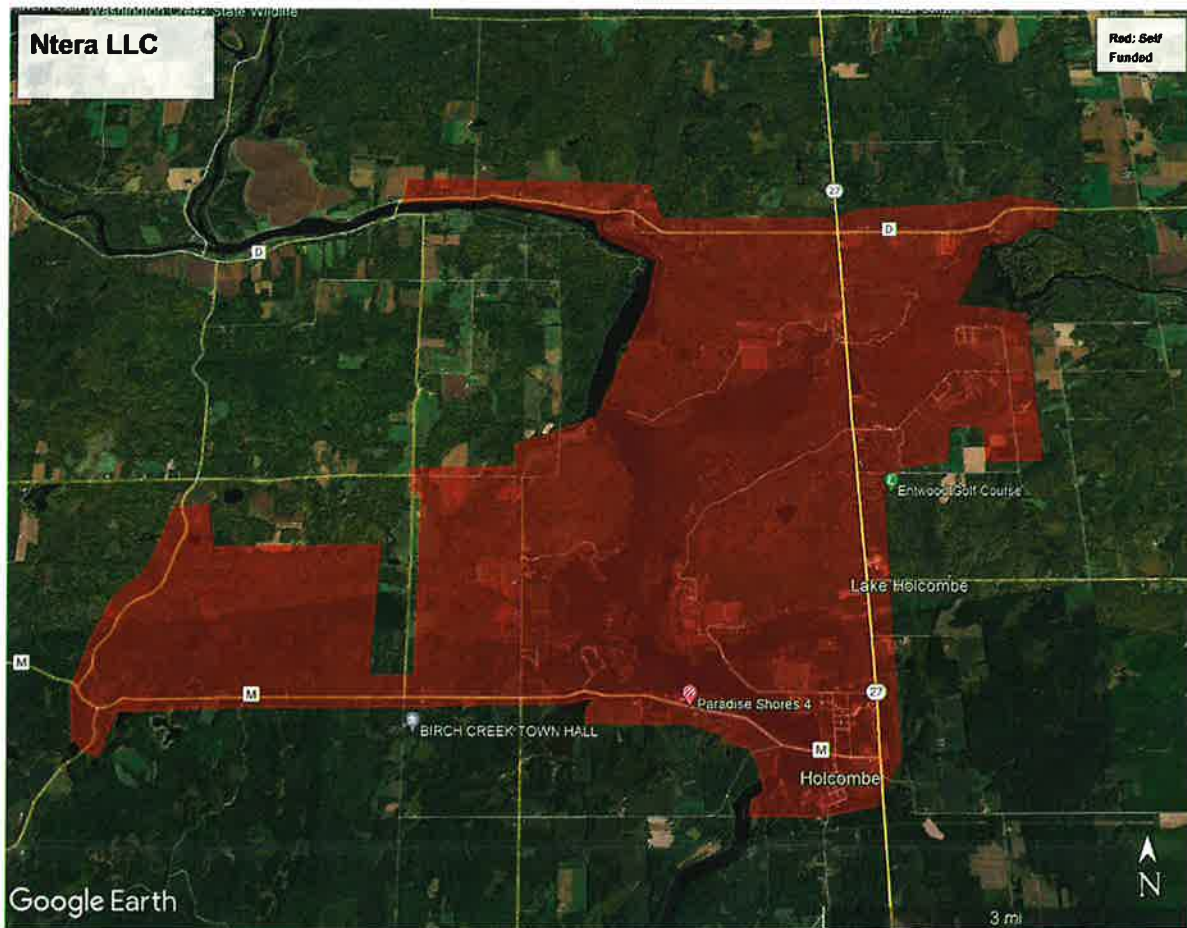
If applicable, an applicant must comment upon the status of all prior broadband expansion grant projects, including the type of broadband technology used, the

facility route actually built or installed, the number of residential and business customers actually connected, and other relevant details of the prior projects.

Ntera has completed the requirements of the State PSC Grant that was received in 2019 in the Town of Birch Creek. The State PSC Grants received in 2020 have been constructed and have been activated with service. Ntera has met or exceeded the requirements of the State PSC Grants received to date and has continued to expand into more rural communities. All Ntera broadband is FTTH, based on proven Calix GPON technology. Our active customer count is over 1200.

An applicant must also comment on broadband construction projects undertaken in prior years that were not funded in part by the Broadband Expansion Grant program.

The original buildout for Ntera in Lake Holcombe, was done without any Broadband Expansion Grant funding. This area serves over 500 customers. Please see image below. The area shown in red is our original buildout which was all self-funded.



b) A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

All Ntera customers are connected via FTTH, therefore there will be no duplication of broadband infrastructure, as Ntera is the only provider offering FTTH and speeds of up to 1Gbps.

c) A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project. This must include the most recent financial statements or budget to actuals report.

Partners of Ntera are committed to fund Ntera's construction and bring quality broadband service to the underserved and unserved portions of Wisconsin. Ntera's performance on previous State broadband grants demonstrate our commitment to excellence, and our ability to

manage and execute large scale projects. The most recent financial statement as of, December 31st 2021, can be referenced on Page 23.

d) For middle mile projects, state the terms under which the applicant will make its middle mile fiber resource available to last mile providers.

N/A This is not a middle mile project

e) For middle mile routes, state the amount of fiber capacity, by number of fiber strands in a cable, that the applicant has been reserved for public use.

N/A This is not a middle mile project.

f) A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those service.

Ntera's FTTH network brings access to healthcare never before possible in the project area. With fast reliable broadband services customers have access to countless new options including Telehealth, Telemedicine, and Telecare. See Exhibit B. A statement from Marshfield Clinic explains, "MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services. Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away."

g) A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

With every level of education from 4K through college going to Virtual Learning, as well as the introduction of reliable broadband at speeds of at least 50Mbps download and 25Mbps upload as offered by Ntera, students can have instant access to an educational institutions on-line curriculum including live streaming classes. This project would benefit approximately 250 students across NW Wisconsin. Specific educational programs offered within the project area include, iForward, K12.com, and CAVE. See Exhibit E, a statement from Cadott School District. "Quality internet access is not available in many area's where our students live. For families

who do not have options, students must try to find a time at the school or another location where they can complete work that students with access can complete within their own home. "

h) A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or country in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to: The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publicly owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project. The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.

The following townships and business have pledged contributions to the project: Town of Anson (Page 29), Town of Arthur (Page 30), Town of Cleveland (Exhibit A.1), Town of Ruby (Exhibit A), Marshfield Clinic (Exhibit B), and Chippewa County (Page 24). The contribution amount can be found in the letters of support from the individual entity.

Ntera Financial Statement

December 31, 2021

Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	1,055,074.90
Due From Customer	\$	(8,436.68)
Other Accounts Receivable	\$	4,346.55
Inventory, Materials and Supplies	\$	223,210.06
Total Plant in Service	\$	10,864,425.48
Less <u>Accumulated</u> Depreciation	\$	(1,324,752.91)
Prepayments	\$	19,951.59
Total Asset	\$	10,833,818.99
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$	574,551.10
Accounts Payable, Other	\$	3,622.23
Other Funded Debt	\$	1,756,947.35
Other Current Liabilities	\$	517,827.82
Total Liabilities	\$	2,852,948.50
Equity		
Member Equity	\$	10,000,000.00
Retained Earnings	\$	(2,019,129.51)
Total Equity	\$	8,573,615.50
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$	10,833,818.99

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION**

Resolution No. 07 - 22

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE GRANT APPLICATION OF NTERA, LLC TO
HELP QUALIFY FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION FUNDING FROM THE
STATE OF WISCONSIN - RANDY SCHOLZ**

1 Passage of this resolution will provide matching funds for Ntera, LLC as it applies to the
2 Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin for funding from the Broadband Expansion Grant
3 Program to provide broadband services to unserved and underserved areas of Chippewa
4 County that are in Ntera's service area. This provision of local government matching funds will
5 help Ntera qualify for the grant funding from the PSC.

6 On July 20, 2021, the County Board approved Resolution 21-21 which approved
7 \$531,657.06 of matching funds for Ntera to use as part of its application to the PSC for a
8 Broadband Expansion Grant to be used in the Towns of Wheaton and Howard. In October
9 2021, Ntera was approved for over \$1.9 million in grant funding for the projects in the Towns of
10 Wheaton and Howard.

11 The PSC has now allocated an additional \$100 million in funding for the Broadband
12 Expansion Grant Program and applications for these grants are due by March 17, 2022. The
13 purpose of the funding is again to be used for the expansion of high-speed broadband internet
14 to the unserved and underserved areas of the State of Wisconsin. The State Broadband Office
15 at the (PSC) coordinates broadband investment, develops broadband coverage maps, and
16 manages the Broadband Expansion Grant Program.

17 To expand high-speed broadband internet access to the unserved and the underserved
18 areas of the State of Wisconsin, and more specifically in Chippewa County, it will be the local
19 telecommunications companies (Telcos), such as Ntera, LLC, that will be installing the
20 infrastructure necessary to accomplish that goal. Ntera is requesting that Chippewa County
21 again provide matching funds as part of its application for broadband expansion funding from
22 the PSC. On February 24, 2022, the County Board tentatively approved \$500,000 of funding for
23 local Telcos, such as Ntera, to apply for a PSC Broadband Expansion Grant. The County
24 Administrator is recommending that of that \$500,000, \$171,182 be approved for Ntera LLC's
25 PSC application.

26 Chippewa County believes that providing funding for Ntera's grant applications is an
27 eligible expenditure that would be allowed under the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

28 and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan
 29 Act "Investments in Infrastructure." If this resolution is approved, Ntera would be eligible to
 30 receive \$171,182.00 in funding from Chippewa County if their application to the PSC is
 31 approved. Those funds would come from the County's ARPA funds.

32 NTERA, LLC is requesting that Chippewa County contribute funding along with the
 33 Towns of Arthur, Ruby, Cleveland, and Anson. The Ntera broadband expansion project would
 34 provide coverage in the Towns of Arthur, Ruby, Cleveland, Estella, Goetz, Eagle Point, and
 35 Anson. The Towns of Arthur, Ruby, Cleveland and Anson have agreed to provide a total of
 36 \$45,000 of funding as part of Ntera LLC's application to the PSC, as follows:

37 Arthur - \$10,000;
 38 Ruby - \$15,000;
 39 Cleveland - \$15,000; and
 40 Anson - \$5,000.

41 Note that during the application process for Broadband Expansion Grant funding in July 2021,
 42 the Town of Goetz agreed to provide \$10,000 in funds and the Town of Eagle Point agreed to
 43 provide \$300,000 in funds. The Town of Estella has not agreed to provide funds for this request
 44 or as part of the July 2021 application process.

45 Passage of this resolution will commit \$171,182 of ARPA funds that the County received
 46 from the Federal Government to be used as part of NTERA, LLC's PSC application. Ntera will be
 47 applying for a broadband expansion project that would serve 316 locations at a total project
 48 cost of \$2,196,803. NTERA, LLC will be requesting that the State of Wisconsin provide grant
 49 funds of \$1,537,760 and NTERA, LLC would fund \$442,861 of the total project cost.

50

Resolution No. 07 - 22

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE GRANT APPLICATION OF NTERA, LLC TO HELP QUALIFY FOR
BROADBAND EXPANSION FUNDING FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN - RANDY SCHOLZ**

WHEREAS, the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin is allocating an additional \$100 million in funding for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, similar to the broadband expansion funding the PSC was offering in July 2021; and

WHEREAS, applications for this newest round of Broadband Expansion Grant Program funding must be filed with the PSC by March 17, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the goal of this funding is to continue the process of providing high-speed broadband access to the unserved and underserved citizens of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the State Broadband Office at the PSC coordinates broadband investment, develops broadband coverage maps, and manages the Broadband Expansion Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the Broadband Expansion Grant Program helps providers find a path to return on investment in areas of the state that are challenging to serve due to population density or geography; and

WHEREAS, to expand high-speed broadband internet access to the unserved and the underserved areas of the State of Wisconsin, it will be the local telecommunications companies (Telcos) that will be installing the infrastructure necessary to accomplish that goal; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County supports this PSC initiative to expand high-speed broadband internet access in the State of Wisconsin and supports the local Telcos' efforts to obtain the available State funding to meet the goals of the PSC initiative; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County believes that providing matching funding for Telcos to help qualify for Broadband Expansion Grant funding is an eligible expenditure allowed under the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County believes this eligible expenditure falls under "Investments in Infrastructure" in the Final Rule released by the Department of U. S. Treasury; and

WHEREAS, to help qualify for this State funding, applicants for these PSC grants should provide matching funds for their broadband expansion projects; and

WHEREAS, on July 20, 2021, the County Board passed Resolution 21-21, which approved

95 \$531,657.06 of ARPA funds to be used by the Telco, Ntera LLC, as part of its July 2021
 96 Broadband Expansion Grant application with the PSC; and
 97

98 WHEREAS, Ntera LLC's July 2021 grant application was approved by the PSC in October
 99 2021 for broadband expansion projects in the Towns of Wheaton and Howard, in part due to
 100 the matching funds provided by Chippewa County and the effected towns; and
 101

102 WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC is now in the process of making another application for funding
 103 from the Broadband Expansion Grant Program and is requesting that the State of Wisconsin
 104 provide \$1,537,760 of the total project cost of \$2,196,803 and that Ntera, LLC would provide
 105 \$442,861 in funding; and
 106

107 WHEREAS, the Town of Arthur has agreed to contribute \$10,000 of funds, the Town of
 108 Ruby has agreed to contribute \$15,000 of funds, the Town of Cleveland has agreed to
 109 contribute \$15,000 of funds, and the Town of Anson has agreed to contribute \$5,000 of funds
 110 for a total of \$45,000 of funds as part of the NTERA, LLC application for broadband expansion
 111 grant funding; and

112 WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC has again requested that Chippewa County provide matching
 113 funding to assist in the broadband expansion in Chippewa County; and
 114

115 WHEREAS, the total number of locations that would be served by this broadband
 116 expansion would be 316; and
 117

118 WHEREAS, Chippewa County believes that expansion of high-speed broadband internet
 119 access throughout Chippewa County is key to the economic vitality of the County and therefore
 120 providing financial assistance to Ntera, LLC to help qualify for this ARPA funding is necessary
 121 and appropriate; and
 122

123 WHEREAS, any County ARPA funding must be utilized by Ntera LLC by September 30,
 124 2024; and
 125

126 WHEREAS, on March 24, 2022, the County Board authorized the use of \$500,000 of
 127 ARPA funds to be used for broadband expansion to the unserved and underserved citizens of
 128 Chippewa County; and
 129

130 WHEREAS, the County Administrator is recommending that \$171,182 of the \$500,000 be
 131 approved to be used as part of Ntera LLC's application for Broadband Expansion Grant Program
 132 funding;
 133

134 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board of Supervisors
 135 does hereby support the PSC \$100 million initiative to expand high-speed broadband internet
 136 access to the unserved and underserved in Wisconsin, and more particularly in Chippewa
 137 County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Chippewa County shall provide \$171,182 in funds as part of the Ntera, LLC Broadband Expansion Grant Program grant application and that if that application is approved, that \$171,182 be provided to the Ntera LLC expansion project as agreed by the County and Ntera LLC.

Forwarded to the County Board by the County Board.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Total Project Cost	\$2,196,803
Total Grant Request	\$1,537,760
NTERA, LLC Contribution	\$442,861
Total Contribution of the Towns	\$45,000
Chippewa County Contribution	\$171,182
(Chippewa County's Contribution will be utilizing American Rescue Plan Act Funds.)	

03/8/2022 County Board

Approved as to Form:

Todd A. Pauls
Todd A. Pauls, Corporation Counsel

3/1/2022

Lori Zwiefelhofer
Lori Zwiefelhofer, Finance Director

3/1/2022

Randy B. Scholz
Randy B. Scholz, County Administrator

3/1/2022

February 10th 2022

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant
Administrator Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Re: Aid to Construction – Matching Funds Ntera Grant Application

Ms. Nieto:

The Town of Anson will commit \$5,000.00 to the Ntera fiber project in the Town of Anson as Aid to Construction.

The Town of Anson is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction. Strategically, this grant will enable the Town of Anson to provide high-speed connectivity to its residents. Our underserved residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy.

Our values of providing excellent customer service align with Ntera's principles. Together we can improve the lives of the citizens of this area as well as continue to attract new residents and economic development to the area.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jen Jensen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jen" and last name "Jensen" clearly distinguishable.

Jen Jensen

Clerk

February 9th 2022

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant
Administrator Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Re: Aid to Construction – Matching Funds Ntera Grant Application

Ms. Nieto:

The Town of Arthur will commit \$10,000.00 to the Ntera fiber project in the Town of Arthur as Aid to Construction.

The Town of Arthur is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction. Strategically, this grant will enable the Town of Arthur to provide high-speed connectivity to its residents. Our underserved residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy.

Our values of providing excellent customer service align with Ntera's principles. Together we can improve the lives of the citizens of this area as well as continue to attract new residents and economic development to the area.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Donna Shifflett
Clerk/Treasurer, Town of Arthur

November 8th, 2021

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant Administrator, Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower
6th Floor Madison,
WI 53705-9100

Re: Aid to Construction — Matching Funds NTERA Grant application

Ms. Nieto:

The Town of Cleveland will commit \$15,000 to the Ntera fiber project in the Town of Cleveland as Aid to Construction.

The Town of Cleveland is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction for the following reasons -

1. Strategically, having fiber in our town will provide reliable high-speed connectivity that will enable us to attract new residents and businesses, in addition to supporting local farms. The Covid- 19 pandemic has brought to light the poor level of service currently available, frustrating students and those who work from home.
2. Our underserved residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy. Our values of providing excellent customer service align very well with Ntera. Together we can improve the lives of the citizens of this area. It is our hope that this is the first of many fiber investments made in our service area

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,


Mike Beighley

Chairman, Town of Cleveland

Exhibit A

February 2nd, 2022

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant Administrator, Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower
6th Floor Madison,
WI 53705-9100

Re: Aid to Construction — Matching Funds NTERA Grant application

Ms. Nieto:

The Town of Ruby will commit \$15,000 to the Ntera fiber project in the Town of Ruby as Aid to Construction.

The Town of Ruby is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction for the following reasons -

1. Strategically, having fiber in our town will provide reliable high-speed connectivity that will enable us to attract new residents and businesses, in addition to supporting local farms. The Covid- 19 pandemic has brought to light the poor level of service currently available, frustrating students and those who work from home.
2. Our underserved residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy. Our values of providing excellent customer service align very well with Ntera. Together we can improve the lives of the citizens of this area. It is our hope that this is the first of many fiber investments made in our service area

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Rob Winchel

Chairman, Town of Ruby

Exhibit B



**Marshfield Clinic
Health System**

Marshfield Medical Center
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449

March 10, 2022

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support/Commitment for the Chippewa County Broad Band Initiative Grant proposal

Marshfield Clinic is an integrated health system located in Marshfield, WI serving central, north-central and north-western Wisconsin, this includes patients who reside in Chippewa County. We are a Mission, Vision and Value's driven organization that strives to "Enrich the Lives of those we serve". MCHS has used Telehealth to reach unserved and underserved populations throughout Wisconsin since 1997.

MCHS is supportive of the efforts of this proposed project in Chippewa County and are pleased to provide this letter of support for their grant application. Further, if funded by the PSC, Marshfield Clinic Health System will provide a contribution in the amount of \$10,000 to Ntera LLC toward this project. This project will expand internet access to about 316 residential homes that also include home based businesses. This area is also home to a number of MCHS employees who work remotely.

Over the course of the last 6 years, MCHS has worked closely with the communities we serve in an effort to help them prepare for a time in which more healthcare can be delivered using technology directly into the patient's home. The COVID-19 Pandemic accelerated the move to delivering care via telehealth much more quickly than expected. However, Telehealth was able to respond quickly and offer continued access to healthcare services by our patients throughout the Pandemic. Since March of 2020, MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the Pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services.

Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away. Federal legislation is expected to make these new flexibilities to use telehealth permanent. Telehealth visits allow patients better access to healthcare without the need to travel or miss work or school. This allows patients to more conveniently maintain their chronic illness appointments, have a visit with their Primary Care Doctor or complete needed follow-up care. A number of new services are likely to join the array of telehealth services already offered by health systems across the country. A patient's access to broadband at home will be a determining factor in which services they can consume and which they cannot. MCHS will be at the forefront of offering these new care modalities.

Collaborative efforts are needed to expand broadband across Wisconsin and MCHS is proud to support this Broadband expansion project and we urge the Public Service Commission to fund this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Turney MD, MS, FACP, FACMPE
CEO

Town of Eagle Point
Chippewa County



March 7, 2022

Kristy Nieto, Administrator Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Broadband Access in the Town of Eagle Point, Chippewa County

Dear Ms. Nieto:

This is in regard to Ntera's recent request for the Town of Eagle Point's support, permission to access town right-of-ways, and consideration for a reduction in utility permit fees to promote the availability of broadband services to Eagle Point residents. At the regular meeting held on February 21, 2022, the Eagle Point Town Board voted to reduce Ntera's permit fees to install broadband services in the town. This agreement is for the length of the specific project presented at the February 21, 2022 town board meeting.

We fully support all efforts to bring broadband services to under-served residents of the Town of Eagle Point. As previously mentioned, the town will provide in-kind assistance by waiving seventy-five percent (75%) of the permit fees as listed in Section 4 of Ordinance Establishing Road Standards 2015-5. Broadband companies are required to complete and submit for approval right-of-way access permits prior to any broadband service installations. A copy of this ordinance is available for viewing on the town's website www.townofeaglepointchippewa.com.

We wish Ntera success with their grant application and broadband project. On behalf of our town residents, I want to thank the Public Service Commission and Ntera for their efforts to bring broadband services to the Town of Eagle Point.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Ferstenou, Town Chairman

c: Laurie Hebert, Town Clerk



Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4907

March 8, 2022

Kristy Nieto
Administrator Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

RE CHIPPEWA CO/NTERA GRANT APPLICATION

I am writing in support of Chippewa County and Ntera's application for funds through the Public Service Commission Broadband Program.

Expanding fast and reliable internet to underserved communities has been one of my top priorities. Broadband is critical to our economy and a vital component in educating our children. Projects like this proposed by Ntera in collaboration with Chippewa County in rural Wisconsin will enhance our broadband capacities and expand on previous efforts to improve internet service in the region.

This project would provide contiguous service to outlying areas of Anson, Arthur, Cleveland, Eagle Point, Estella, Goetz and Ruby and will reach over 300 underserved homes and businesses. I commend Chippewa County's commitment to match public funds for this important project.

I strongly encourage investment in infrastructure projects that will lead to new opportunities for businesses and strengthen the regional economy. I urge you to also support this project. Please keep my office updated on the progress of this application and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas P. Tiffany".

Tom Tiffany
United States Representative

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CADOTT COMMUNITY

426 Myrtle Street, Cadott, Wisconsin 54727

www.cadott.k12.wi.us

March 14, 2022

Kristy Nicto, Broadband Grant Administrator, Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Dear Kristy,

I am writing this letter to express the support of the School District of Cadott Community for the Ntera Grant to expand broadband service and access within our district boundaries into the townships of Anson, Arthur, and Goetz. Quality internet access is a barrier for many of our students and families, not just those in poverty as broadband access is not available in many areas where our students live.

This grant will be a promising step in opening access to our families to broadband opportunities. This will enhance communication and allow us to further work for technology integration with curriculum and online student options. High speed internet access and the lack of it creates a disparity for families as many opportunities and post-secondary coursework assume that students have access capability in their homes. For families who do not have options, students must try to find a time at the school or another location where they can complete work that students with access can complete within their own home.

This grant will allow a portion of our families to improve their opportunities within the school educational environment by connecting and extending learning at home. With future grant possibilities, we can increase access to students and families within our district. This will allow us to better plan for technology access and updated curriculum which includes video, simulation labs, and personalized learning.

In summary, the Cadott Community School District is pleased to support the grant application with Ntera.

Sincerely,



Jenny Starck

"It is the school district's mission to challenge each and every student to reach his or her full potential."



Caleb Hundt
Jr./Sr. High School Principal
715-289-3795
Fax 715-289-3085
hundtc@cadott.k12.wi.us

Terri Goettl
Elementary Principal
715-289-3795
Fax 715-289-3017
goettlt@cadott.k12.wi.us

Melissa Lesik
Director of Special Education
715-289-3795
Fax 715-289-3085
lesikm@cadott.k12.wi.us

Dedicated to ensuring high levels of learning for all students and staff.

Exhibit F



An affiliate of Edina Realty Home Services, a complete real estate services company

Hello Dennis,

I am a managing broker for Edina Realty with over 50 agents serving counties throughout northwestern Wisconsin from Superior to Mondovi.

I am writing to you to address the need for reliable broadband service and how this impacts our ability to market or sell a home. The need to have reliable broadband is every bit as important when we are marketing the home, or working with a buyer to purchase a home, as having electricity.

Factors we consider when listing a home would be the lack of reliable broadband and discussing with sellers to disclose this, as it may impede a buyer's ability to work, further schooling online, or conduct business from home when necessary. It has been written in multiple contracts that a buyer is to test broadband service to the home within so many days of an accepted contract to ensure speed is operational for their needs when working from home.

Edina Realty strongly supports Ntera's efforts to bring reliable broadband to the rural areas of Chippewa County. Based on Ntera's performance since its inception, we respectfully request that the grant request(s) being submitted by Ntera, LLC be approved.

I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have about how this impacts our real estate business and look forward to seeing more progress with reliable broadband to our served areas.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Bowe

Sales Manager/Broker

Maryjobowe@edinarealty.com

Exhibit G

Public Private Partnership Agreement

By and between the Town of Eagle Point, Wisconsin, and Ntera, LLC

THIS AGREEMENT is made the twenty-first day of February, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Eagle Point, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help provide access to resources and the support structure necessary for economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, a Wisconsin Corporation, wholly owned by two Cooperatives, Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative and Citizens Connected, doing business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and/or underserved residences and businesses in the Town of Eagle Point where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within the Town of Eagle Point, Chippewa County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Eagle Point for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, has applied for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant through the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to expand access to broadband services in the Town of Eagle Point; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant, Ntera, LLC, has requested that the Town of Eagle Point enter into an Agreement, referred to as a Public Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- Providing in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waiving fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- Grant permission on and across Township property, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- Recognizing that the Project is a priority and is consistent with any internal planning documents adapted by the Town of Eagle Point Town Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** Ntera, LLC and the Town of Eagle Point Town Board will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement, and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** Ntera, LLC, shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join this Agreement.

5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in Whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF EAGLE POINT, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN, a Participating Party

By: Dennis Ferstenou

Dennis Ferstenou, Town Chairman

Date: 3/7/2022

NTERA, LLC a Participating Party

By: Dennis Bachman

Dennis Bachman, President

Date: 3/9/2022

Exhibit H

Public Private Partnership Agreement

By and between the Town of Anson, Wisconsin, and Ntera, LLC

THIS AGREEMENT is made the tenth day of February, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Anson, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help provide access to resources and the support structure necessary for economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, a Wisconsin Corporation, wholly owned by two Cooperatives, Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative and Citizens Connected, doing business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and/or underserved residences and businesses in the Town of Anson where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within the Town of Anson, Chippewa County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Anson for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, has applied for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant through the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to expand access to broadband services in the Town of Anson; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant, Ntera, LLC, has requested that the Town of Anson enter into an Agreement, referred to as a Public Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- Providing in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waiving fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- Grant permission on and across Township property, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- Recognizing that the Project is a priority and is consistent with any internal planning documents adapted by the Town of Anson Town Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** The Town of Anson Town Board will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement, and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** Ntera, LLC, shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join this Agreement.

5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in Whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF Anson, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN, a Participating Party

By: Jen Jensen
Jen Jensen, Clerk

Date: 2/21/22

NTERA, LLC a Participating Party

By: Dennis Bachman
Dennis Bachman, President

Date: 3/2/2022

Exhibit I

Public Private Partnership Agreement

By and between the Town of Arthur, Wisconsin, and Ntera, LLC

THIS AGREEMENT is made the seventh day of March, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Arthur, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help provide access to resources and the support structure necessary for economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, a Wisconsin Corporation, wholly owned by two Cooperatives, Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative and Citizens Connected, doing business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and/or underserved residences and businesses in the Town of Arthur where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within the Town of Arthur, Chippewa County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Arthur for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, Ntera, LLC, has applied for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant through the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to expand access to broadband services in the Town of Arthur; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant, Ntera, LLC, has requested that the Town of Arthur enter into an Agreement, referred to as a Public Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- Providing in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waiving fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- Grant permission on and across Township property, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- Recognizing that the Project is a priority and is consistent with any internal planning documents adapted by the Town of Arthur Town Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** The Town of Arthur Town Board will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement, and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** Ntera, LLC, shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join this Agreement.

5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in Whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF ARTHUR, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN, a Participating Party

By: 
Donna Shifflett, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: 2-16-2022

NTERA, LLC a Participating Party

By: 
Dennis Bachman, President

Date: 3/2/2022

Exhibit J

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jason Bergeron and I live at 15748 State Highway 178, Jim Falls, WI (Town of Eagle Point). I wanted to take a moment to show my complete support for Ntera's proposed broadband expansion from the corner of Cty Hwy R and State Hwy 178 south down Hwy 178 to 200th and extending down many Town roads along the way. This has been a community not just under-served but completely unserved for any reliable internet options. This was not more apparent than the last 2 years and the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

By trade I am a Forecasting Analyst for Mason Companies Inc in Chippewa Falls, WI. I have been trying to navigate evolving company policies designed to slow the spread and mitigate the risk of mass employee outages because of Covid. Many of which were designed around the idea of working from home on a regular basis. The only problem was my ability to work from home depended entirely on what that day's tasks were as my home internet is not fast enough to conduct any sort of remote download of data from our corporate databases. It is also not reliably fast enough to conduct video conferences, I would give it a 50/50 chance, so if said meeting was with someone important it was needed for me to make sure I was in office. This caused me to regularly ask special permission for entry into the office (to the level of annoyance to my supervisors), to have to move offices, to never have a true 'home base' for my day-to-day responsibilities. And that hurt not only my job satisfaction but my overall productivity of the company that was paying me to be productive.

Now that we are starting to slowly transition away from these protocols at Mason Companies, like many corporate operations, we are becoming more relaxed and offering new flexibilities to their employees. My company does plan to offer future flexibility in working from home, a hybrid approach. A flexibility I would enjoy very much. It would add to my quality of life as well as my job satisfaction. But like all the protocols laid out during the pandemic it is highly unlikely I will be able to take advantage of these new flexibilities. That is unless a reliable broadband service is provided in my area as Ntera is proposing.

I could also go into the struggles that my wife has faced as an administrator in public education. But I think I have main my point clear enough. Our community does not have the internet service it needs to operate in the world we now live in. This is long overdue, and I truly hope you are willing to support Ntera's proposal. I appreciate your time.

Thank you,
Jason Bergeron
Forecasting Analyst, Mason Companies Inc
Former Supervisor of District 6, Chippewa County
Future Supervisor of District 7, Chippewa County

15748 State Highway 178
Jim Falls, WI 54748
Town of Eagle Point
715-829-6687

8:47



facebook.com



Lake Holcombe Community Discussion



Dawn Kaul ▶ **Lake Holcombe Community Discussion**

November 13, 2021 at 5:33 PM · 🌐



ISO lake lot or lake home... high speed internet availability a must for my job. Ntera at our land is amazing so seeking lake property to build or lake home within Ntera coverage area. Anyone selling or know someone looking to sell?



Like



Comment



Share



Ntera GoGig and 2 others

Most recent ▼



Write a comment...



Exhibit L

customer care

From: Kate <ludvigsenkm@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 6, 2021 8:06 AM
To: info
Subject: Service coming to Arnold, Wi areas

Good morning,

I recently seen a news article that stated Ntera has received grant funding to provide services to rural areas. One of those areas being Arnold, Wi in the Town of Ruby.

I currently reside in the Town of Ruby, about 3 miles from Arnold. I am wondering if the internet service will finally make it my way. We are in desperate need of an upgraded service. I work from home from time to time and the current service offered here just doesn't cut it. Ntera came through the Holcombe area and only a portion of the road I live on was completed, the service never reached my residence.

Can you let me know if I can expect Ntera to come down to my address of 31276 300th Ave, Holcombe WI 54745? It would benefit not only my household, but my neighbors as well.

Thank you,
Kate Beres